

Pieces of Iowa's Past, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides weekly during the Legislative Session, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All italicized text/block quotes in this document are taken directly from historical publications with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

Background

In 1913, as part of an effort to create a more visually appealing area around the Iowa State Capitol, the Iowa State Capitol Grounds Extension and Renovation Project was authorized by the Thirty-fifth General Assembly.

The Executive Council was instructed to purchase any or all of the 50 to 60 acres surrounding the Capitol within the next 10 years. At the time, however, many Iowans felt that this was merely a plan to provide Des Moines with a beautiful park at the expense of taxpayers. Before the project even got started, people began to question the necessity of such an undertaking. Animosity began to develop among several of the state's citizens. Some argued the grounds around the Capitol were fine, while others considered the area an eyesore. Inevitably, the issue was brought to the Iowa Supreme Court.



These pictures depict the views from the south toward the Capitol.

Project officials provided compelling photographic evidence to the court of the clutter and decay surrounding the Capitol. A series of four panoramic

photographs portraying a tidier area promoted the cause of those who opposed the project.

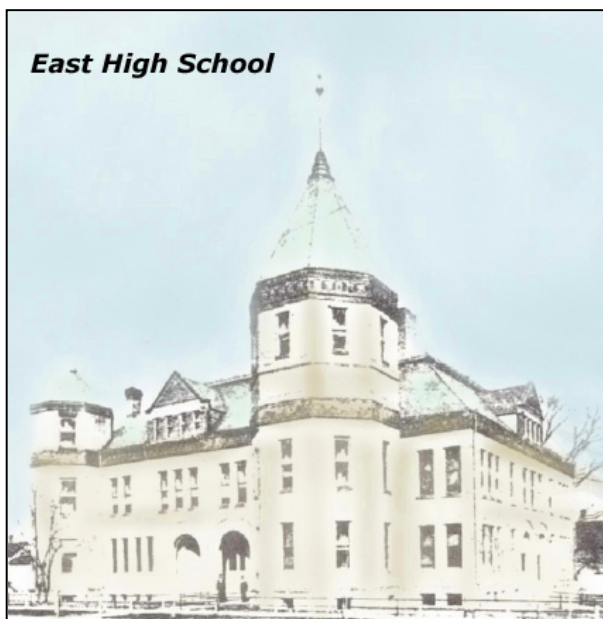
1913 Panoramic South View from the Iowa State Capitol

This series of panoramic photographs was taken in 1913. Each photo was taken from the second floor of the Capitol. This is a study of the buildings and homes to the south and the west.



*Original panoramic photo courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines
Electronically tinted: Legislative Services Agency*

Looking from the south porch of the Capitol across Walnut Street is the large



the left. By 1913, the original tower had been removed.

Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument designed by Harriet Ketchum of Mount Pleasant and completed in 1897. To the left of the monument is residential housing including a three-story brick apartment building. The street on the far left of the photograph is no longer there. East Eleventh Street, East Tenth Street, and most of the structures in this photograph were removed about 1915, during the Capitol Grounds Extension and Renovation Project. Old East High School is visible along the tree tops on



To the right of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument is the Church of the Visitation. The church congregation moved to 1271 East Ninth Street when the church building on Walnut Street was razed in 1915. That congregation recently changed its name to "Our Lady of the Americas Church."

In 1914, the building materials (brick, stone, wood) were sold by the state to the Maple Street Baptist congregation. They used this recovered material to build a new structure around their old church located at 823 Maple Street. The Maple Street Baptist Church building is now located just north of Interstate 235 at 1552 East Maple Street.

Ottumwa Tri-Weekly Courier

Thursday, September 3, 1914

VISITATION CHURCH SOLD FOR \$80,000

Des Moines, Sept. 1.—The executive council has arranged to purchase the Church of Visitation, East Ninth and Walnut streets, for \$80,000. The purchase has just been consummated after weeks of negotiation. The church officials asked \$125,000. Plans for the erection of a new edifice have not been given out. The Church of Visitation is located within the capitol extension tract.



Our Lady of the Americas
1271 East Ninth Street

The Des Moines Register

September 9, 1915

THRONGS AT WORK ON RAZED CHURCH

African Baptists Busy in Three
Shifts on Salvage From Old
Visitation Structure.

MINERS' LAMPS ARE USED

Material Taken to Site of New
Church and Same Force Will
Aid in Erection.

The congregation of the Maple Street African Baptist church has a job on its hands. And both the men and women members of that congregation are working as hard as possible getting the job off their hands. Several months ago the members of

Several months ago the members of the colored congregation paid the state \$1,000 for the Church of the Visitation, which the state had purchased of the Visitation parish. It was within the capitol extension tract and the state needed the land for the capitol park.

In the deal the state agreed to wreck the church. It was up to the congregation to move the salvage away after the building had been razed.

Material for New Church.

The Negroes want the salvage to use in building a new church on the site of their present one at East Ninth and Maple streets. They haven't a great amount of money to spend on erecting the new edifice, so they struck upon the plan of each man doing his share to hasten the day of dedication. Later the plan was enlarged so as to include the women.

Last Monday the state entered upon its part of the contract to wreck the building. And simultaneously there appeared on the scene at East Tenth and Walnut half a hundred persons to clean the bricks and pull the nails out of the boards as fast as the wreckers got them out of the building.

The Maple street church has about 300 members. Most of the men are employed in the mines east of the city, and welcome the work out of doors. Three forces are at work during the day. One goes on at 4 or 4:30 o'clock in the morning and works un-

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til it is time for the men to go to their regular employment. Then a gang, composed mostly of men who work underground at night, appears and labors throughout the day. In the evening a third force goes on the job and works until late in the night.

Women Are Helping.

In the morning and at night while it is dark the men go about their work wearing miners' caps with the candles lighted so that they can see what they are doing. Each force has its accompanying force of women assistants, who pull the nails or clean the bricks the same as the men. It is a strange sight to watch the flaming little lights of the caps moving in and out of the old structure at night.

As fast as the bricks are cleaned or the lumber is prepared it is piled up for the teamsters to haul it to the site for the new church. The teamsters also are members of the church. The Baptists worked all day Labor day on the structure, and expect to have the material all ready to be removed in a few weeks.

Ernest R. Lucas is the man in charge of the work. He is generally on the job in the daytime, while at night the men are directed by E. T. Hicks of 1341 Buchanan street. The Rev. Samuel Bates, pastor of the church, also finds plenty to do in the brick cleaning line.

Meanwhile the regular church services are being held in the old edifice. The walls of the new building, which

will be larger in each direction than the old one, will be built all around the old one before it will be abandoned.

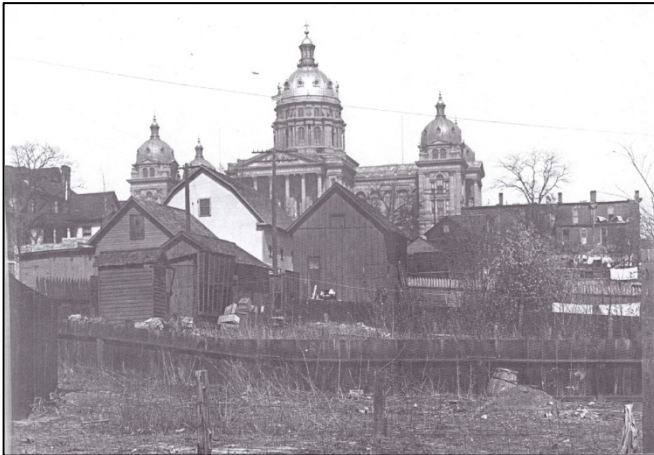
To Start New Building Soon.

The men are anxious to get the old church razed so that work on the new building can be begun soon. But it will be necessary to wreck entirely the Church of the Visitation before the new building can be started as the stones in the foundation of the Catholic church are wanted for the foundation of the African Baptist.

"We can't start at the bottom and wreck up," one of them explained to a Register reporter last night. "I wish we could—then we could start work on the new church so as to finish by winter time."

The members will cooperate in building the new church, too.

The state employs P. S. Ervin, a colored watchman, to guard the workers and their material at night. Mr. Ervin explained to the reporter, however, that he is a Methodist—not however, that he is a Methodist—not



These pictures depict the views from the west toward the Capitol.

1913 Panoramic West View from the Iowa State Capitol

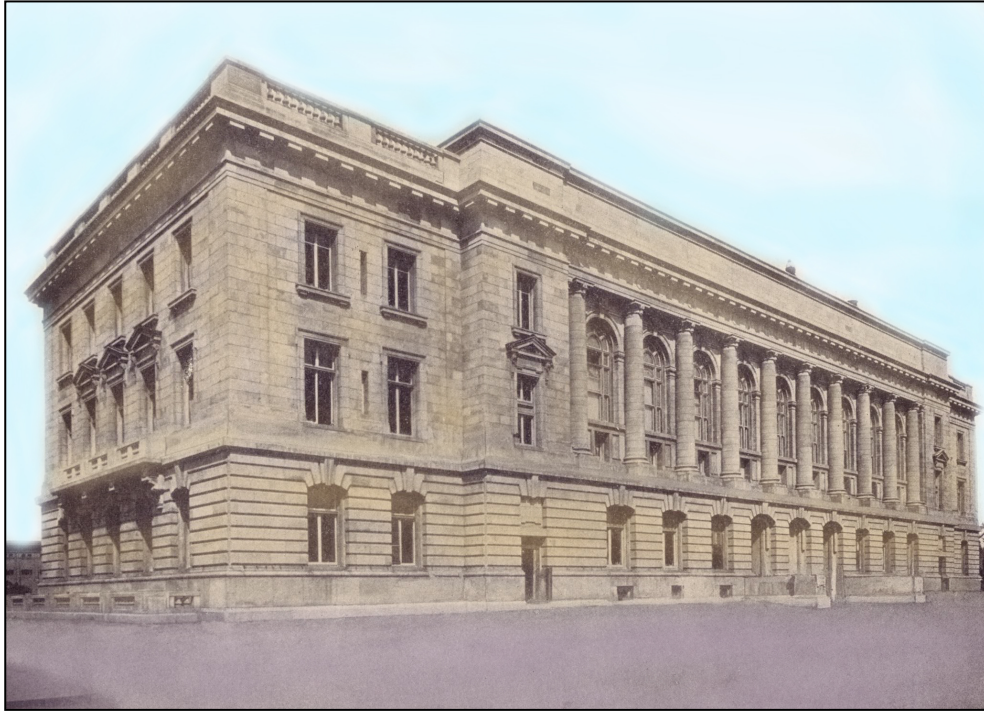


***Original panoramic photo courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines
Electronically tinted: Legislative Services Agency***

Looking west from the balcony of the Law Library, East Ninth Street runs through the center of the photograph from Walnut Street on the far left to Grand Avenue on the far right. Locust Street ends at East Ninth Street directly in front of the Capitol.

Today, Locust Street ends at East Seventh Street and all of this area is now the West Capitol Terrace. The Parrott Rifles, Mortar, Centennial Fountain, and Pioneer Statuary Group are visible in the foreground, and looking out over the Des Moines skyline you can see City Hall and the Coliseum. The towers visible on the right are Bryant Elementary School and Swedish Lutheran Church, now known as Capitol Hill Lutheran Church. The 1913 city

directory lists only residential housing between Walnut Street and Grand Avenue along East Ninth Street. The Stewart Goodrell home sat on the northwest corner of East Ninth Street and Grand Avenue. The Wallace State Office Building occupies this lot today.



Above: Des Moines City Hall Below: The Coliseum, Des Moines





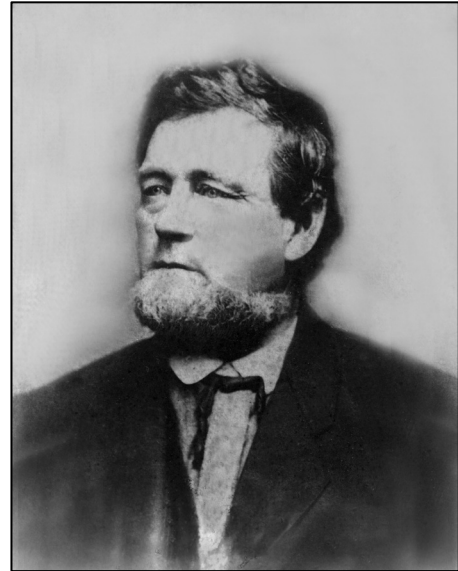
Bryant Elementary School



Swedish Lutheran Church, now known as Capitol Hill Lutheran Church.

Representative Stewart Goodrell

[Representative Stewart Goodrell](#), a native of Pennsylvania, was born in 1813. He was a mechanic and in 1842 came to the new Territory of Iowa, making his home in Washington County. He became an active Whig politician, and in the spring of 1846, he was chosen a member of the Second Constitutional Convention, which assembled at Iowa City on May 4, 1846, and framed the Constitution under which Iowa was admitted as a state on December 28, 1846.



In August 1846, Goodrell was elected to the House of Representatives of the First General Assembly, where he helped to frame the first Iowa Code. He also served in an extra session which was held in January 1848. He was reelected and served through the Second General Assembly. On March 3, 1856, he was appointed one of the commissioners to locate the capital of the State at Des Moines. He purchased property in Des Moines and soon moved there.

When the Republican Party was organized in Iowa, Goodrell became a member. In the fall of 1859, he was again elected to the House in the Eighth General Assembly. In 1869, he was appointed United States Pension Agent for the Des Moines District and died November 14, 1872.

The Register and Leader.

Sunday, June 7, 1914

The Goodrell home, 832 East Grand avenue, as built by Stewart Goodrell soon after he came to Des Moines in 1854. Mr. Goodrell was a member of the First general assembly, that convened at Iowa City and he was one of the commissioners that located the capitol at its present site. He represented Polk county in the lower house in 1860. President Grant appointed him pension agent and he served in that capacity until his death. Mr. Goodrell also held a commission from Abraham Lincoln to settle some affairs resulting from the civil war. His eldest son, Scott Goodrell, was chief engineer in the capitol. His namesake, Stewart Goodrell, was chief clerk in the insurance department of the auditor of state, and was married to Miss Laura N. Wilson, 1888, and returned from Chicago to die in the home of his birth, in August, 1914. Two daughters, Misses Ella and May Goodrell, have served a long apprenticeship in the Des Moines schools, Miss May Goodrell having been principal of the East Des Moines high school for thirteen years. The youngest daughter, Mrs. Anne Goodrell-Sharpless, is a resident of Seattle, Wash. Mr. Goodrell and his second wife, who was a sister to William A. Scott, both died in the Grand avenue home, which has been the scene of his principal events—birth, marriage, death.



The Stewart Goodrell home

[The Iowa Capitol Grounds: 1913 Extension and Reconstruction Project](#)

This booklet contains the proposed improvements, pictures, and newspaper articles of the period. This booklet is also available for purchase in the Capitol Gift Shop.